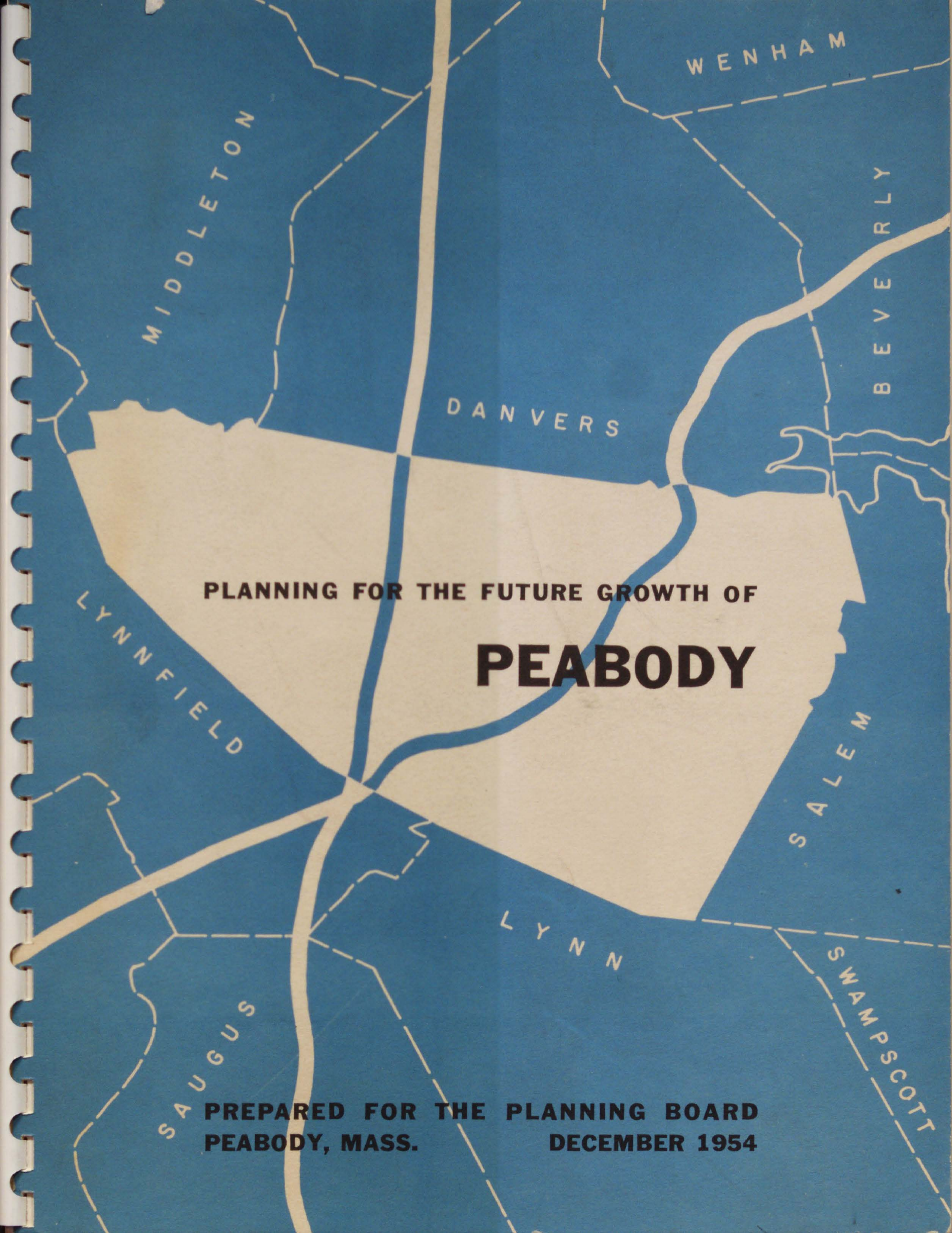

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE GROWTH OF

PEABODY

PREPARED FOR THE PLANNING BOARD
PEABODY, MASS. **DECEMBER 1954**

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE GROWTH OF PEABODY — MASSACHUSETTS

PEABODY PLANNING BOARD

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Report Prepared by ADAMS, HOWARD & GREELEY, Planning Consultants – Banarsi D. Kambo, Associate Planner – 15 Ash St., Cambridge, Massachusetts.

DECEMBER 1954

ADAMS, HOWARD & GREELEY
CITY PLANNING CONSULTANTS
15 ASH STREET, CAMBRIDGE 38, MASSACHUSETTS

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TELEPHONES: UNIVERSITY 4-5755
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December 31, 1954

Peabody Planning Board
Peabody, Massachusetts

Gentlemen:

We are happy to submit for your consideration our report on "Planning For the Future Growth of Peabody," which summarizes the results of the survey of existing conditions and trends which has been carried out under your sponsorship during the past nine months. The major objectives of the survey, as outlined in our proposal dated March 31, 1954, were as follows:

1. Revision of the present Zoning Map to show correct zoning boundaries.

2. Correction of present base (street) map of the City so as to show all existing streets.

3. Survey and mapping of basic existing conditions as to land use, major public facilities, principal economic factors, population and school enrollment, and major trends.

4. Analysis of chief planning problems to be tackled, and crystallization of major factors underlying the principal policy decisions.

The work of collecting and mapping the survey data was carried out most effectively by Banarsi D. Kambo, associate planner on our staff, assisted during the summer months by Samuel M. Ellsworth.

We wish to take this opportunity of expressing our appreciation of the wholehearted cooperation received from the members of the Planning Board, from Public Works Director Frank McCarthy, and from all other city officials who assisted us in the preparation of this study.

Sincerely yours,

Frederick J. Adams

Frederick J. Adams
for ADAMS, HOWARD & GREELEY

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Community Facilities

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Sewerage Service

Note:
Large scale maps of the above (600 feet to the inch), in color, are available for public inspection and official use on application to the Planning Board or to the City Clerk's office in City Hall.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE GROWTH OF PEABODY

Prospects of Future Growth

Peabody is on the verge of a substantial increase in residential development and possibly of its industrial plant. After nearly doubling in population between 1900 and 1920, the increase in the next twenty - year period amounted to only eleven per cent. However, since 1945 - and particularly since 1950 - the trend has again moved sharply upward. This has been due to a number of causes, not the least of which have been the completion of the Gloucester Turnpike (Route 128) and the widening of the Newburyport Turnpike (Route 1) with a consequent increase in accessibility to cities and towns to the north and east of Boston.

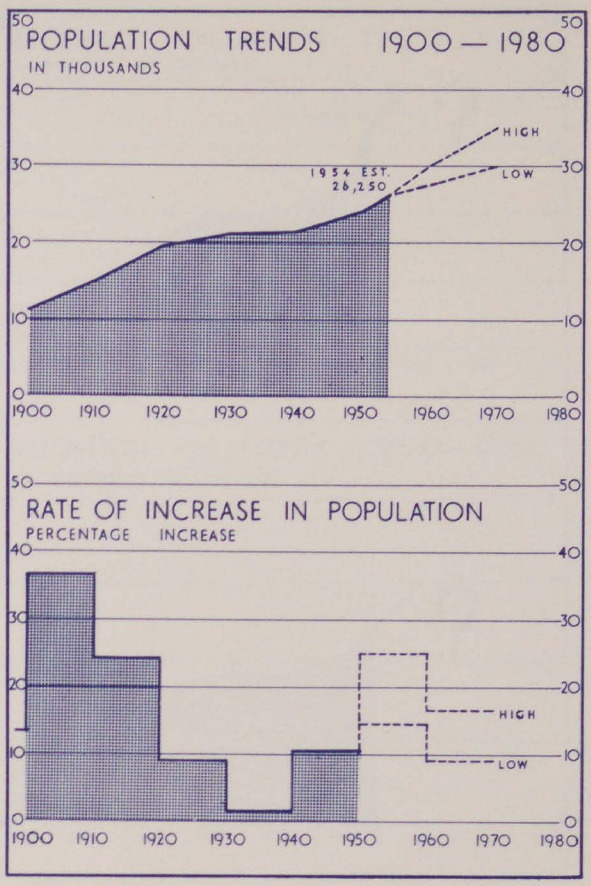
The impact of decentralization in the Boston Metropolitan Area has really begun to make itself felt in the belt of suburban communities within a radius of fifteen to twenty miles of the central city; and while Peabody has been slower in receiving the full impact of this than communities to the west and south-west of Boston, there are sufficient evidences of an upward trend in growth to justify reversing earlier expectations of a flattening off of the population curve. Rather than reaching a population of 30,000 in the year 2000, as estimated in the 1951 report of the consulting engineers for the proposed improvements to the city's water supply system, it now seems likely that such a figure will be attained within the next six to ten years (See page 3). This has important implications for those charged with the determination of policies regarding community

facilities and services of all types, whether in connection with their programming, financing or location.

Trends in Residential Development

The population in 1940, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, was 21,711 -- an increase of only 666 over the year 1930. This low rate of growth was due largely to the decline in the leather industry, which in the past employed about seventy-five per cent of those engaged in manufacturing employment in the city. The Federal Census gives the population in 1950 as 22,645 but this is generally held to be too low a figure. There seems to be good reason for this assumption, as during this decade there was a natural increase in the city's population (excess of births over deaths) of 1612, and during the four post-war years of 1946 to 1949 inclusive building permits were issued for the construction of over seven hundred new homes. Assuming that the latter resulted in adding about 2,500 to the population, the gross increase would be over 4,000 over 1940 -- from which must be subtracted those migrating from the city and those who vacated older dwellings to establish families in new homes. (This would include returning married veterans who had formerly lived with their parents). Assuming an out-migration of not more than 1,700 between 1940 and 1950, it would seem reasonable to set the population in the latter year at approximately 24,000 -- a figure which is further supported by the U.S. Census figure of 6632 dwelling units in 1950 compared to 5,688 in 1940. This indicated a drop in the average family size

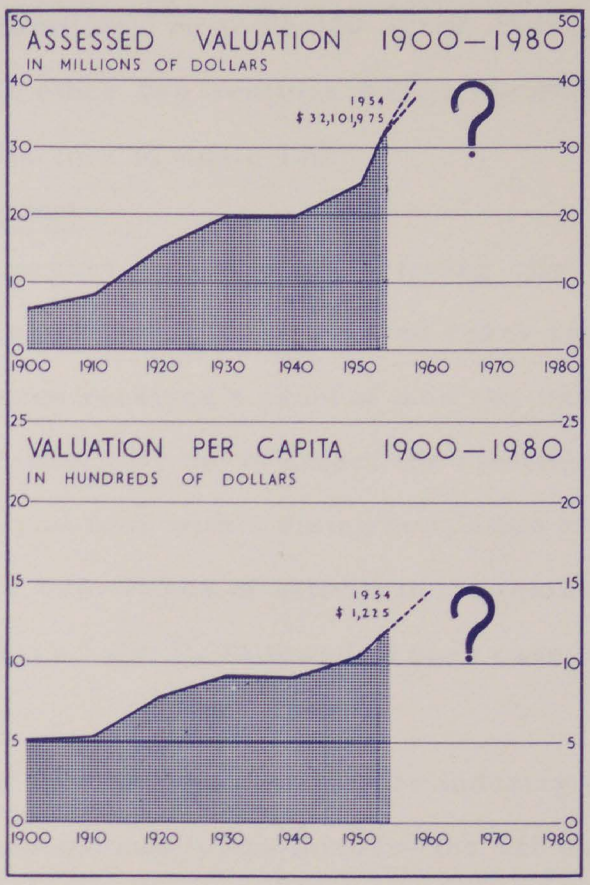
from 3.8 to 3.6 in the ten-year period on the above basis, whereas if the lower population estimate for 1950 is used the average would drop to 3.4.



By the end of the current year approximately 1,250 building permits for new dwellings will have been issued since the beginning of 1950, while the number of new electric light meters installed (all types of structures) between December 31, 1950 and September 30, 1954, was 1,047. This indicates an average rate of construction during the five-year period of 250 homes per year, and by 1955 the number of dwelling units in Peabody should be close to 8,000. Assuming a further drop in the average family size to 3.4, the population next year would reach a total of 27,000, so that it would only require a similar net increase in the following five years to bring the total population to 30,000 by 1960 -- a figure which may well be exceeded if Peabody and the surrounding communities are successful in stimulating the construction of new industrial enterprises.

Does Peabody have land available for such an expansion of

residential construction and where is it likely to take place? The Land Use Survey indicates that at least 2, 500 acres in the city are suitable for such development, of which only 400 acres would be needed to meet the requirements of the next five years at an average density of 2 1/2 families (or about 8 persons) per acre. This represents less than one-sixth of the land resources readily available for this type of development, so that there would appear to be enough residential land to meet the requirements of the next thirty years at the present rate of growth. Of the 2,500 acres now available approximately 1,200 acres are in West Peabody, 800 acres in the section of the city which lies between Routes 1 and 128, and 500 acres east of Route 128. Assuming that water supply requirements will be met, it seems probable that more than half of the new residential development during the next ten years will take place in West Peabody and would be at a lower density than development closer to the urban center. One thousand new families on 500 to 600 acres, is perhaps a conservative estimate of the development that might take place in this part of the city between now



and 1965. A similar number of families, on some 350 acres of land, might be expected to locate in the other two sections with a majority choosing sites within convenient distance of Route 128.

Trends in Industrial and Business Development

Peabody's claim to be the largest leather manufacturing city in the world stems from a modest beginning over three hundred years ago, when in 1639, a man named Dickerson received a grant of land "to make tan pits and dress goat skins and hides." By the middle of the nineteenth century it was a prosperous industrial town with a rising population and by 1915 it had reached a total of 18,625. Peaks of activity in the leather industry were reached in World Wars I and II, followed in each case by declining employment.

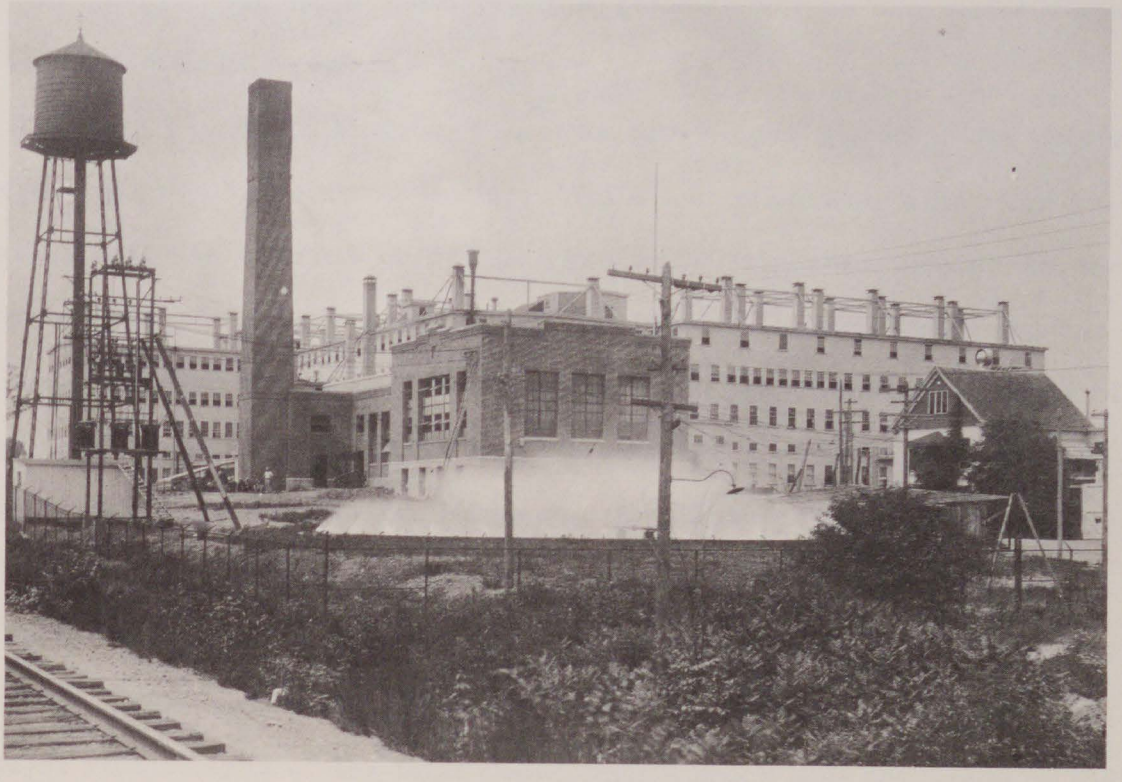
The continuing dependence of Peabody upon the leather industry is indicated by the fact that in 1952 approximately two-thirds of the 112 establishments, employing nearly 83 per cent of all industrial workers in the city, were concerned with the manufacture or processing of leather and leather products. Most of the remaining workers were employed in textile dyeing and bleaching. Trends in manufacturing activity in Peabody for the past twenty-five years are indicated below:

Year	Number of Plants	Number of Employees
1929*	85	6,342
1933	74	5,465
1939*	89	5,792
1943	86	5,967
1949	111	5,792
1953	111	5,184

* U.S. Census of Manufacturing; data for other years supplied by Mass. Div. of Unemployment Security.

The decline in the leather industry has been due to a number of factors, such as the high cost of raw materials and the substitution in place of leather of new types of material. Demands for leather and leather products during World War II brought about a slight improvement in employment figures, but the trend is again downward and any hope for a significant increase in the number of industrial jobs in Peabody is dependent on the attraction to the city of new types of manufacturing enterprise.

The two major state highways which intersect the community



(Photo courtesy of L. O. Tilford)

A Manufacturing Plant in Peabody

provide ready access to all parts of the Boston Metropolitan Area and full advantage should be taken of these important assets in stimulating the diversification of the industrial pattern of the community. The recent re-zoning of the City Infirmary property for industrial use is a step in this direction, but further study should be given to the possibility that there are other areas suitable for such development which could appropriately be re-zoned without impairing the residential values of nearby properties. While it is not possible within the scope of this study to make any specific recommendations of this nature, areas suitable for such development have been indicated in a general way on one of the maps accompanying this report.

Retail trade in Peabody is not as significant a part of the City's economy as in some communities. While a considerable amount of retail activity is carried on by business establishments located on the Newburyport Turnpike, serving highway traffic largely originating outside of the city, the central business district loses much of the trade of the City's population to retail centers in other communities. According to the 1948 Census of Business, retail sales in Peabody were $13,777,000 - or $595 per capita, compared to $890 per capita for Essex County. This indicates that the central district is functioning as a large neighborhood shopping center rather than one which meets the major retail needs of the total community - much less the needs of the sub-region of which it is a part. It appears probable that Peabody,

(Photo courtesy of Salem News)

View of Peabody Square

together with the adjoining communities, will continue to depend on Salem, and Lynn for such needs until a more attractive alternative is presented.

Problems of the Central District

The central area of the city cannot continue to serve its function as the major shopping and transportation center of the community unless steps are taken to cope with the problems created by the railroad

crossings and the lack of off-street parking space. Some study has already been given to the latter problem but the only satisfactory solution is one which would consider the total needs of the area, including desirable modifications in the present pattern of residential, industrial and community uses. Here it may be possible to take advantage of recent amendments to the Housing Act of 1949, particularly the new Title III which provides for "a workable program of Urban Renewal".

One of the major objectives of the above program, as stated in President Eisenhower's message to Congress, is the "rehabilitation of salvable areas, turning them into sound, healthy neighborhoods by replanning, removing congestion, providing parks and playgrounds, reorganizing streets and traffic, and by facilitating physical rehabilitation of deteriorated structures." Federal aid is available in limited amounts both for neighborhood planning and for land acquisition, but as a prerequisite to such aid it requires "a bona fide and practical expression of the community's own projected program to deal with its own problems, presented in good faith and with the firm resolve to carry that program through to accomplishment." Peabody has many advantages which have so far not been fully capitalized. Through the comprehensive planning of its natural and man-made resources the city can meet the problems created by rapid urban expansion with some degree of optimism.

Future Requirements for Community Services

One of the most important objectives of a long-range community plan is to assist members of the legislative and executive departments of the local government in meeting future requirements for municipal services without putting too great a strain on the city's economic resources. This demands a more thorough analysis of future trends in residential and industrial growth than has been possible within the limitations of the present study. However, it is believed that the estimates of population and land requirements presented herewith are sufficiently realistic to bring out the need for careful planning in the development of an efficient and workable program of community improvement.

The fact that the ten-year estimate of two thousand new residential units may require the laying out of twenty miles of local streets and utilities, the construction of three 12-room schools or their equivalent, an increase in municipal water consumption of almost half-a-million gallons per day, together with a comparable expansion in such community services as police and fire protection, street lighting, and recreation facilities, points up sharply the need for a comprehensive approach to problems of future growth within the city's boundaries. For example, the residential development which it is estimated may take place in West Peabody during the next ten years could conceivably call for the construction of another 14 elementary school classrooms in addition to the 14 classrooms provided for in the projected building. The present

enrollment in the Kiley School is only 258, but by the time the new building is completed it will probably be operating at close to capacity. Whether expansion to meet anticipated requirements after 1956 should be carried out on the same site, on another location, or a combination of both is a matter which should be determined at the earliest possible date.

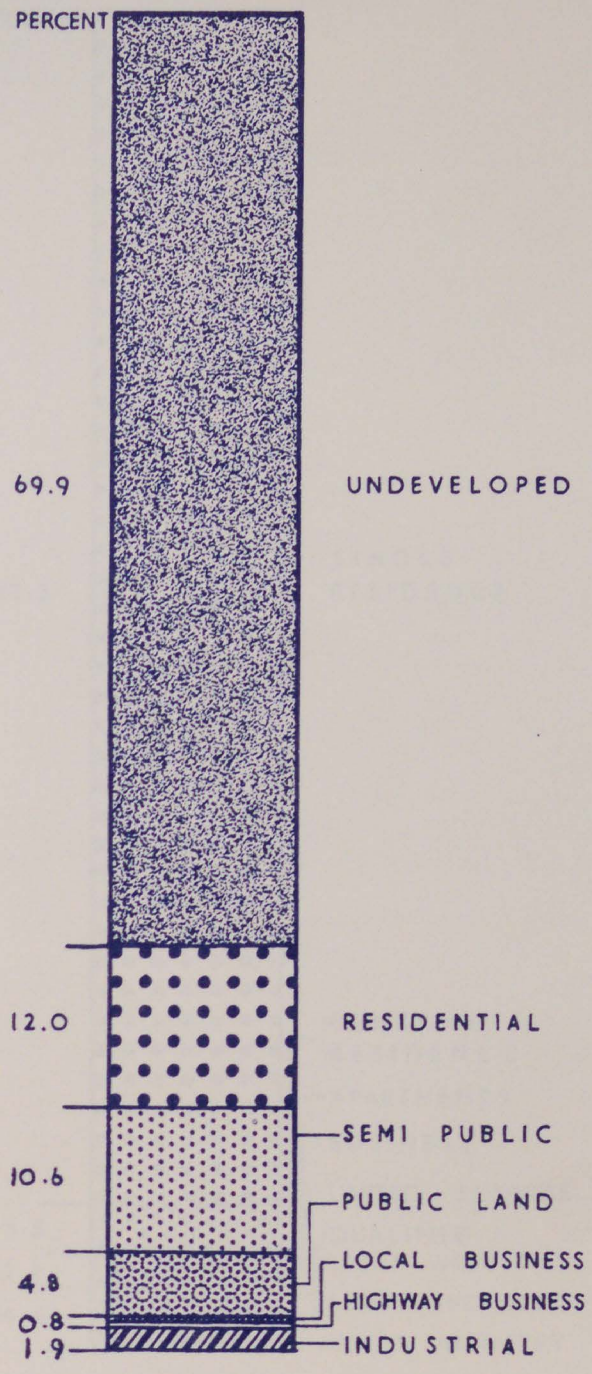
Another problem, the urgency of which is also high lighted by the rate of residential growth, concerns projected improvements to the city's water supply system. Reference has already been made to the fact that the 1951 recommendations of the engineering consultants were based on an anticipated population of 30,000 in the year 2000, and that this population is likely to be reached within the next six to eight years. Assuming that commercial requirements followed the same pattern, as would be probable if expected industrial development takes place in the new zone established adjoining Route 128, the total demand on the water supply system by 1965 would exceed 5 million gallons per day. The fact that the amount used in 1953 averaged 3.7 million gallons per day, or 0.3 million gallons more than in 1950, indicates that the above estimate of future needs is not excessive. It also provides an additional check on the estimate made earlier of present population trends.

The engineers' report on proposed improvements to the city's water supply system recommended in 1951 a fifteen-year program to be inaugurated immediately, at an annual cost averaging about $50,000 per year. Because of the possibility that Lynn and Danvers may not be able

to continue their present arrangements with Peabody for many more years, the urgency of the situation is even greater than present trends in water consumption indicates. It would seem that a decision on this matter cannot be delayed without serious consequences.

Guidance and Control of Future Growth

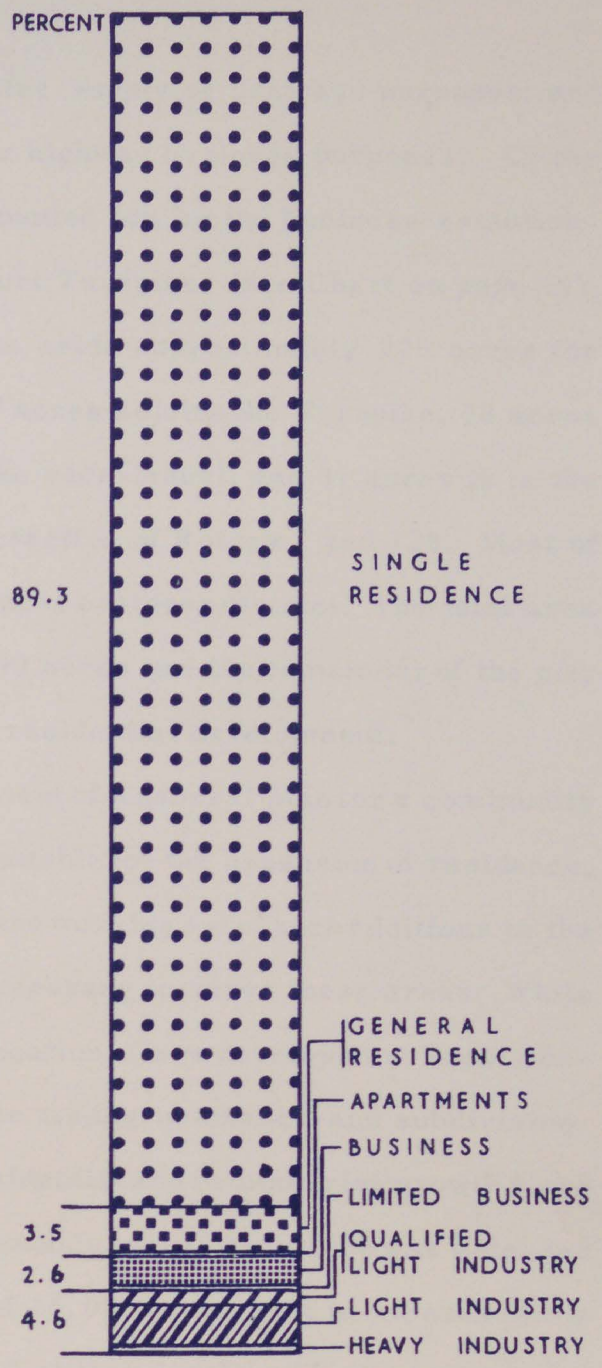
The Massachusetts enabling acts providing for community guidance and control over land and building development are among the best in the country. Peabody has taken advantage of these acts by setting up a Planning Board, providing it with authorization to control new subdivision developments, and passing a zoning ordinance which sets up bulk, height and occupancy standards for all types of buildings and land



EXISTING LAND USE

uses. The latter, first adopted in 1937, has been recently amended to increase the minimum size of lots in certain sections of the single-family zone and to provide additional area for industrial development.

The Land Use Survey, which represents a major feature of the present study, indicates that approximately 3,600 acres of land in the city (or 34 per cent of the total area) is developed for all types of public and private uses. Residential uses account for 1,270 acres; public and semi-public for 1,625 acres (including nearly 700 acres owned by the Salem Country Club); 610 acres is owned by industrial establishments, of which about one-third is intensively developed for industrial use and much of the remainder held



EXISTING ZONING

for non-intensive uses such as water supply or drainage purposes; and 85 acres is developed for retail or highway business purposes. Of the latter amount, nearly half is accounted for by the business establishments located along the Newburyport Turnpike. (See Chart on page 11).

The present zoning map sets aside approximately 275 acres for business development, of which 117 acres adjoins the Turnpike, 58 acres is in West Peabody (surrounding the race-track), and 31 acres is in the Limited Business zone at the intersection of Routes 1 and 128. Most of the remaining 69 acres is in the central business district. The total area zoned for industrial use is about 490 acres and the remainder of the city is zoned for various categories of residential development.

A major stage in the development of a general plan for a community is the determination of areas most suitable for the expansion of residence, business and industry together with the working out of such additions to the main highway system as may be necessary to serve these areas. While strict control over the timing and location of new development is not possible, much can be done through the zoning ordinance and subdivision control regulations to guide new residential and commercial growth along the right lines. Only recently the Peabody zoning ordinance was amended to provide for a minimum lot size of 15,000 square feet in one area of the city. With the large amount of land still undeveloped, of which a substantial proportion is topographically unsuited for residential use even at this low density, consideration should be given to the setting aside of

some areas with larger lot requirements - at least 30,000 square feet and possibly one acre. Such areas would logically include those sections which would require excessive municipal expenditures in order to provide adequate utilities and services if the land was subdivided into typical house-lots.

Other revisions to the zoning ordinance which may have to be considered in the near future concern the need for establishing a neighborhood business district to serve the growing residential area of West Peabody, and an increase in the minimum lot requirements in the section between Route 128 and the Turnpike.

ESTIMATES OF POPULATION AND SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

1940 - 1970

	1940	1950	1954	1960		1970	
				Low	High	Low	High
POPULATION							
Total Population	21,711	24,000[1]	26,250	27,500	30,000	30,000	35,000
No. of Dwg. Units	5,688	6,632	7,700	8,350	9,100	9,350	10,900
Persons per Dwg. Unit	3.8	3.6	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.2
Approx. Acreage in Residential Development	800	1,050	1,300	1,600	1,800	2,200	2,600
Families/Res. Acre	7.1	6.3	6.0	5.2	5.0	4.3	4.2
SCHOOL ENROLLMENT							
Elementary School	2,332	2,063	2,716	3,120	3,450	3,150	3,750
Av. enrollment/grade	291	258	340	390	432	394	469
Per cent of population	10.7	8.6	10.4	11.4	11.5	10.5	10.7
High School	-	869	804	1,250	1,375	1,300	1,530
Vocational School	-	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (4 grades)	1,265	969	904	1,350	1,475	1,400	1,630
Per cent of population	5.8	4.0	3.4	4.9	4.9	4.7	4.7
Total School Enrollment	3,597	3,032	3,620	4,470[2]	4,925[2]	4,550	5,380
Per cent of population	16.5	12.6	13.8	16.3	16.4	15.2	15.4
Pupils per Dwg. Unit	0.63	0.45	0.47	0.53	0.54	0.49	0.50

[1] Adjusted from 1950 U.S. Census figure of 22,645 (see p. 2 for explanation)

[2] These figures represent an increase of 34% and 47% respectively over the 1952 total enrollment. (A recent report of the Special Commission on Massachusetts State Teachers Colleges estimates that the increase of enrollment in all Massachusetts public elementary and high schools between 1952 and 1961 will be 33.8%, according to a news release of the Mass. Dept. of Commerce.)

MIDDLETON

DANVERS

LYNNFIELD

LYNN

SALEM

PREDOMINANTLY SINGLE RESIDENCE

PREDOMINANTLY GENERAL RESIDENCE

BUSINESS

INDUSTRY

LAND OWNED BY INDUSTRY

PUBLIC & SEMI-PUBLIC PROPERTY

EXISTING LAND USE
MAP OF PEABODY

SCALE 2400 FEET TO AN INCH

PREPARED FOR PLANNING BOARD

ADAMS HOWARD & GREELEY PLANNING CONSULTANTS

BANARSI D. KAMBO 1954 ASSOCIATE PLANNER

MIDDLETON

DANVERS

LYNNFIELD

LYNN

SALEM

PUBLIC BUILDINGS

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OTHER CITY-OWNED PROPERTY

SCHOOL DISTRICTS' BOUNDARIES

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

MAP OF PEABODY

SCALE 2400 FEET TO AN INCH

PREPARED FOR PLANNING BOARD

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BANARSI D. KAMBO 1954 ASSOCIATE PLANNER

MIDDLETON

DANVERS

LYNNFIELD

SALEM

LYNN

SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE

AREAS 'A'

AREAS 'B'

OTHER

GENERAL RESIDENCE

APARTMENT HOUSE

LIMITED BUSINESS

BUSINESS

QUALIFIED LIGHT INDUSTRIAL

LIGHT INDUSTRIAL

HEAVY INDUSTRIAL

ZONING DISTRICTS

MAP OF PEABODY

SCALE 2400 FEET TO AN INCH

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MIDDLETON

DANVERS

WILMINGTON

LYNN

SALEM

STATE HIGHWAYS

MAJOR CONNECTING STREETS

AREAS NOW SERVED BY SEWER

AREAS READILY SERVED BY CONNECTIONS TO EXISTING SYSTEM

AREAS TRIBUTARY TO POSSIBLE MAJOR EXTENSIONS OF PRESENT MAINS

SEWERAGE SERVICE

MAP OF PEABODY

SCALE 2400 FEET TO AN INCH

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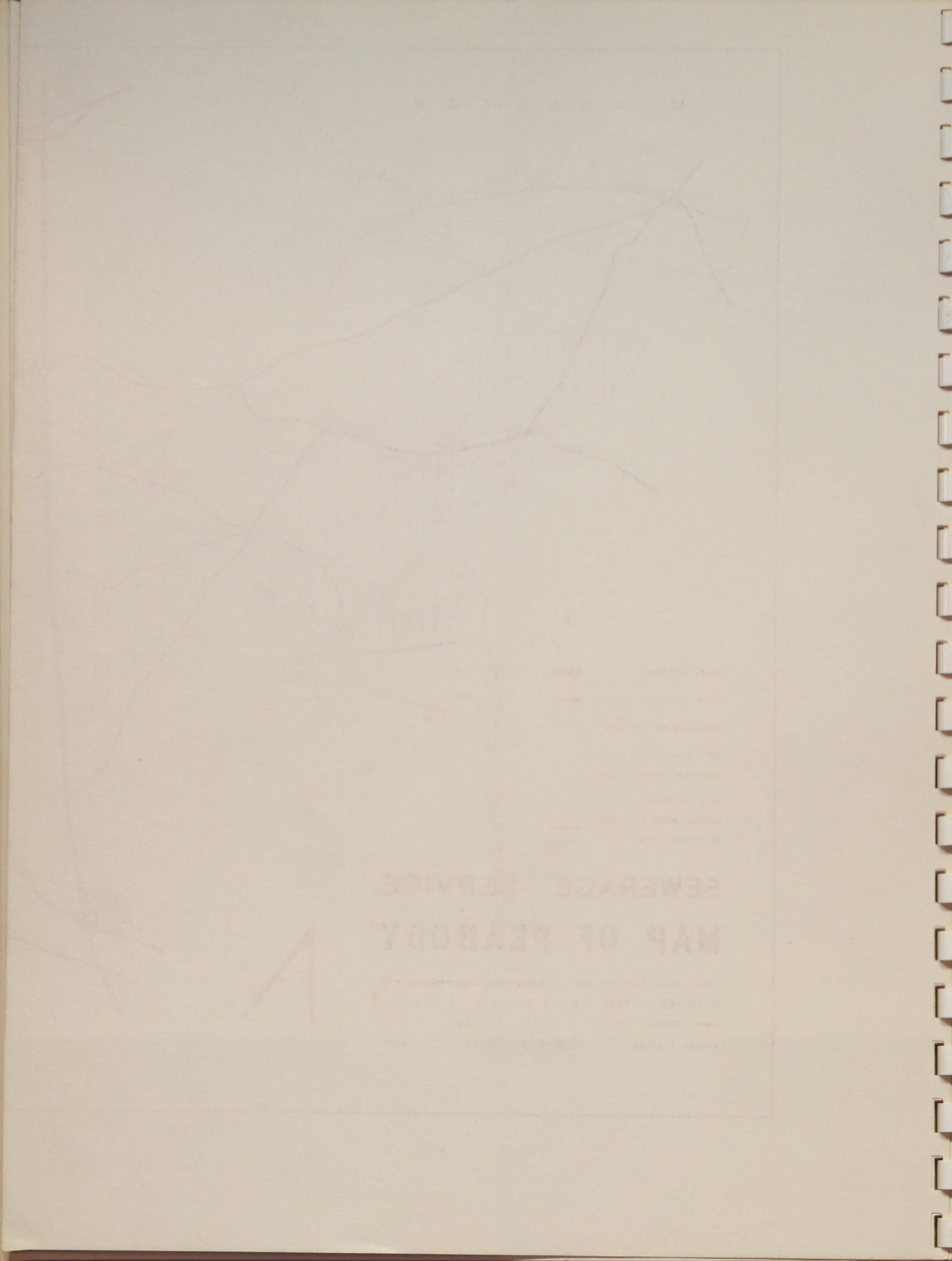

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